

Nantucket Fire Department
4 Fairgrounds Road
Nantucket, MA 02554
508-228-2324

Guidelines for Open Burning Season

OPEN BURNING MAY BE CONDUCTED WITH A PERMIT FROM JANUARY 15TH - MAY 1ST

A permit is required and may be purchased Monday – Friday 8 am – 4 pm at the Nantucket Public Safety Facility, 1st floor permit window, 4 Fairgrounds Road.

Checklist for Residential Open Burning:

- ☐ **Obtain a permit.** Permits are \$25 and are valid for 3 days from the date of issue.
- ☐ **Contact the Nantucket Fire Department each morning for permission to burn.**
Call 508-228-2324 x 0. Weather conditions can change rapidly and the Fire Department will determine on a daily basis whether it is safe to conduct open burning. Open burning may be conducted during periods of good atmospheric ventilation and without causing a nuisance. If winds increase or other conditions change making it unsafe to burn, permits may be cancelled.
- ☐ **Never use gasoline, kerosene, or any other flammable liquid to start a fire.**
- ☐ The open burn site must be **a minimum of 75 feet** from all buildings. Materials may not be piled higher than 3 feet, longer than 25 feet, or wider than 10 feet.
- ☐ Burning is allowed between the hours of **10 am and 4 pm**. All fires **must be ignited by 12 pm** and extinguished by 4 pm.
- ☐ **Be prepared to extinguish the fire if the wind picks up or weather changes.** Most open burning gets out of control during a sudden wind change.
- ☐ **All fires must be attended to by a person 18 years of age or older.** Have fire extinguishing materials on hand including a water supply, shovels, and rakes. Test the water source prior to igniting the fire. **Fires must be attended until extinguished.**
- ☐ **When your burn is complete** – completely extinguish the fire. Burn the fire down to the coals, drown them with water, spread them out, then drown them again.
- ☐ **Call the Nantucket Fire Department, 508-228-2324 x 0 to report that your fire has been completely extinguished and you are done burning for the day.** This must happen by 4 pm.



See page 2 for more information

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WHAT CAN BE BURNED?

Only certain materials can be burned:

- Brush, cane driftwood, and forestry debris from **other than** commercial or industrial land clearing operations
- Agricultural materials such as fruit tree and bush pruning, raspberry stalks, and infected bee hives for disease control
- Trees and brush resulting from agricultural land clearing
- Fungus infected elm wood, if no other acceptable means of disposal is available

WHAT IS PROHIBITED?

The following materials are **not allowed** to be burned:

- Leaves
- Brush, trees, cane, driftwood **from** commercial and/or industrial land clearing operations
- Grass, hay, stumps, and tires
- Construction material and debris

HOW TO SAFELY IGNITE AND TEND THE FIRE:

An adult must always be present during open burning. Children and pets should be kept a safe distance away. Use paper and kindling to start the fire and add progressively larger pieces of wood. Burn one small pile of material at a time and slowly add to it. This keeps the fire from getting out of control. Select a burn location away from any utility lines. Wet and snowy conditions are best because they hinder the rapid spread of fire on or under the ground.

CALL FOR HELP IMMEDIATELY:

If a fire gets out of control call 911 immediately. Use the utmost caution to prevent injury to yourself and others or any fire damage to your home.

ALTERNATIVES TO OPEN BURNING:

Open air burning releases large amounts of carbon dioxide, other gases, and solid substances directly into the air, which can contribute to respiratory problems. Disposal of natural materials is never as good for the environment as using them again in a different form. Tree limbs, brush, and other forestry debris can be chipped or composted into landscaping material.



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Open Fire Guidelines & Regulations

The Fire Department and many other town departments have received numerous questions in regards to what fires are permitted. Fire Pits, Beach fires and Bonfires are more frequently asked during the summer with Brush burning in the winter months. Please call our Fire Prevention office with any questions.

Much of the information provided is taken from Massachusetts State web sites, Massachusetts General laws and the fire code for Massachusetts.

Chapter 48 section 13 of the Mass general laws states “persons eighteen years of age or older may, without a permit, set, maintain or increase a reasonable fire for the purpose of cooking, upon sandy or gravelly land free from living or dead vegetation or upon sandy or rocky beaches bordering on tidewater, if the fire is enclosed within rocks, metal or other nonflammable material.”

527 CMR 1.3.3.72 Cooking Fire. The noncommercial, residential burning of materials not exceeding 3 ft (0.9 m) in diameter and 2 ft (0.6 m) in height, other than rubbish in which the fuel burned is contained in an outdoor fire-place, a barbecue grill, or a barbecue pit for the purpose of preparing food.

What is allowed:

1. January 15 to May 1 Open burning is allowed **with a permit**, under Mass DEP rules and only of certain types of material. Full description of rules and materials that can and can not be burned are listed on the web site link <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/open-burning-safety>
2. Fire Pits are allowed without permit **but must be used for cooking**, kept to a **reasonable size**, Located away from combustibles, contained in a non-flammable enclosure, tended by someone over the age of 18, Only Clean dry firewood must be used and **not create a nuisance** for neighbors due to smoke.
3. SMALL cooking fires, **NOT Bonfires**, are permitted without permit but must meet safety guidelines. 527 CMR 1.3.3.72 referenced above

What is a reasonable fires? The best gauge of if the fire is reasonable and small is can you sit next to the fire with a 2 foot stick to roast a marshmallow? If you cannot sit that close it is too big!!

Away from combustibles including beach grass, buildings, boats, cars and brush/vegetation. Anything that could catch fire!

4. Other activities approved and supervised by the Fire Department

What is not allowed

1. Burning of trash, pallets or construction debris
2. Commercial brush or tree burning from land clearing
3. Leaves
4. Bonfires without a permit (we almost never issue them)
5. Fire on any property without the owner's permission or Lifeguarded Beaches



References:

Massachusetts Department of Fire Services: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/open-burning-safety>

MASS. DEP: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-10/documents/ma-310-cmr-7-07.pdf>

MGL Chapter 48 Section 13: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter48/Section13>